

Damon Chandru Sajnani

University of Wisconsin-Madison, African Languages and Literature
1412 Van Hise Hall, 1220 Linden Drive, Madison, WI 53706 • (608) 262-2487 • Dburchell@wisc.edu

Academic Positions

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI, USA
Assistant Professor, African Languages and Literature, 2015-Present

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
Inaugural Nasir Jones Hip Hop Fellow, W.E.B. Du Bois Research Institute, Hutchins Center for African and African American Research, 2014-2015

Education

Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, USA
PhD, African American Studies - 2015
Dissertation title: Deepening Democracy “Galsen” Style: HipHop and Civil Society in Senegal
Committee: Mary Pattillo (Chair), Charles W. Mills, Nitasha Tamar Sharma
Curricular Track: Politics, Society, and Culture
Discipline: Sociology

Master of Arts, African American Studies - 2011
Curricular Track: Politics, Society, and Culture
Discipline: Sociology

University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, CANADA
Master of Arts, Political Science - 2010
Comparative Politics and Political Theory

Honors Bachelor of Science - 2008
Double Major in Political Science and Zoology, Minor in Philosophy

Teaching and Research Interests

Africana cultural studies; social and political theory; critical race theory; cultural sociology; Africana philosophy; comparative race, racism and (post)colonialism; globalization and diaspora; stratification and intersectionality; HipHop studies; Black power; whiteness studies; critical ethnic studies

Publications

Peer-Reviewed Articles:

- Troubling the Trope of “Rapper as Modern Griot.” *Journal of Pan-African Studies*, vol. 6, no. 3, September 2013. 156-80.
- Rapping in the Light: American Africanism and Rap Minstrelsy. *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture and Society*. December 11, 2014. 16:3-4, 303-329. DOI: 10.1080/10999949.2014.968975.
- Remembering Monarchy, Forgetting Coloniality: The Elision of Race in Canadian Monarchy Abolition Debates. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*. Volume 47, Number 2, 2015, pp. 137-163. DOI: 10.1353/ces.2015.0014.

Book Chapter:

- Recuperating the Real: The Pitfalls and Promise of HipHop Authenticity. *Oxford Handbook of Hip Hop Music Studies*. Justin Burton & Jason Oakes (Eds.). *Forthcoming 2017*.

Book Review:

Ntarangwi, Mwenda. *East African Hip Hop: Youth Culture and Globalization*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009. *Callaloo*. Volume 38, Number 2, Spring 2015, pp. 418-421

Other Publications:

Rachel/Racial Theory: Reverse Passing in the Curious Case of Rachel Dolezal. *Transition Magazine at the Hutchins Center*. June 13, 2015.

<http://hutchinscenter.fas.harvard.edu/news/hutchins/rachelracial-theory-reverse-passing-curious-case-rachel-dolezal>

HipHop's Origins as Organic Decolonization. *Decolonization, Indigeneity, Education & Society*. April 2, 2015. <https://decolonization.wordpress.com/2015/04/02/hiphops-origins-as-organic-decolonization/>

Jay-Z is 1%, Not HipHop. *Black Agenda Report*. November 6, 2012.
<http://www.blackagendareport.com/content/jay-z-1-not-hiphop>

Dissertation:

"Deepening Democracy Galsen Style: Y'en a Marre, HipHop and Politics in Senegal." Order No. 3741438 Northwestern University, 2015. Ann Arbor: ProQuest. URL:
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1751017310>

Articles in Preparation

Jigen ji Dafa Bon! (This Woman is Bad!): The Art and Activism of Senegalese Femcees
The Civil Rights Paradigm of Black Power Studies
Anti-Blackness in Global HipHop Studies
Hip Hop Desis Up North: Rap, Race, and Politics, among South Asian Canadians

Academic Presentations

Invited Talks:

"African HipHop and Social Justice." ILC Roundtable Dinner. International Learning Community. University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI (2016/10)

"The Pleasure Paradox of Africana Aesthetics: Critiques of Pleasure in African Diasporic Music." Africa at Noon. African Studies Program. University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI (2016/9)

"The African HipHop Movement: Youth Culture and Democracy in Senegal." Africa at Noon. African Studies Program. University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI (2015/10)

"The Black Lives Matter Movement and the Politics of HipHop." Harvard College Class of 2010, 5th Reunion. Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (2015/05)

"Oh No You Didn't!" A Panel on Social Consciousness in Black Art & Cultural Appropriation. Panelist. Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (2015/03)

"HipHop Galsen: HipHop Activism and Notions of the Democratic in Senegal." Fall Colloquium with Damon Sajani. Hutchins Center, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (2014/10)

"HipHop Pedagogy and Institutional Change." B-Fresh Holistic Hip Hop Festival. Columbia College, Chicago, IL (2013/10)

"HipHop Scholarship and Community Activism: Bridging the Gap." Remixing the Art of Social Change: A HipHop Approach. Columbia College, Chicago, IL (2011/11)

Conference Presentations:

"The African HipHop Movement: Y'en a Marre's Political Model." Innovation, Transformation and Sustainable Futures in Africa. Annual Joint Conference of the African Studies Association (ASA) and the American Anthropological Association (AAA), Dakar, Senegal, (2016/06)

"HipHop Activism and Notions of the Democratic in Senegal"

Northwestern University Black Graduate Student Association Annual Research Conference.
Evanston, IL, USA (2014/05)

“MLK as HipHop Prophet: KRS One’s Deconstruction of *I Have a Dream*.” Association for the
Study of African American Life and History: 98th Annual ASALH Convention. Jacksonville,
FL (2013/10)

“Post?racialism, American Africanism, and Rap Minstrelsy.” Critical Ethnic Studies and the Future of
Genocide: Settler Colonialism/Heteropatriarchy/White Supremacy. University of California,
Riverside (2011/03)

“HipHop Head of State? The Politics of Wyclef Jean’s Haitian Presidential Bid.” Fault Lines:
American Studies Graduate Conference. University of Texas at Austin (2010/10)

“American Africanism: The Missing Trope in the Critique of HipHop Culture as Minstrel Show.”
Race and Knowledge Production Annual Conference. Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
at the University of Toronto (2009/04)

“Arguments for Abolition of the Monarchy and the Neglected Concerns of Canadians of Colour.”
Colloque de la recherche étudiante en science politique (Political Science Student Research
Symposium). University of Ottawa (2009/02)

“HipHop vs. Hegemony: HipHop in the North American Periphery.” Munk Centre-CIGI Annual
Conference: Periphery as Constraint on US Soft Power. The Centre for International
Governance Innovation (2008/12)

Invited Respondent:

“Black Leftism.” Panelists: David Austin, Minkah Makalani, and Donna Murch. Feeling the Black
Fantastic: A Symposium on the Work of Richard Iton. Evanston, IL. (2014/05)

“US Foreign Policy, Hip Hop and Africa.” Talk by M-1 of dead prez. G-HipHop, Guédiawaye,
Dakar, Senegal (2013/06)

“Globalization, Hip-Hop, and Youth Agency in East Africa.” Talk by Mwenda Ntarangwi. Program
of African Studies, Northwestern University (2010/10)

Scholarships and Awards

- African American Studies Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of Illinois at Urbana-
Champaign (2015-2016, declined)
- Nasir Jones Hip Hop Fellowship, W.E.B. Du Bois Research Institute, Hutchins Center for African and
African American Research, Harvard University (2014-2015)
- Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship, Honorable Mention (2014-2015)
- Journal of Africana Religions Research Assistant Fellowship (2014-2015, declined)
- University Fellowship, Northwestern University (2009-present)
- Graduate Research Grant, The Graduate School, Northwestern University (2012)
- Conference Travel Grant, African American Studies, Northwestern University (2013)
- Conference Travel Grant, African American Studies, Northwestern University (2010)
- Arab-Israeli Studies Scholarship, Hebrew University (2009)
- Dean's Essay Prize, Finalist, University of Toronto (2008)

Teaching Experience:

Courses Taught:

Global HipHop and Social Justice
University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2017/01-2017/06
Critical Whiteness Studies
University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2017/01-2017/06
The Black Radical Tradition
University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2016/09-2016/12
HipHop, Youth Culture, Politics in Senegal
University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2016/09-2016/12

Thesis Supervision

University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2016/01-2016/05

African HipHop and Politics

University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2015/09-2015/12

African Diaspora: Theories and Tropes

University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2015/09-2015/12

Global HipHop and Social Justice

Northwestern University, 2014/04-2014/06

Comparative Slavery, Co-Instructor with Prof. Sherwin Bryant

Northwestern University, 2014/01-2014/03

Guest Lectures:

Music and Politics, Prof. Chérie Rivers Ndaliko

University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, 2016/06

Africa: An Introductory Survey, Prof. Michael Schatzberg

University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2016/04

Africa: An Introductory Survey, Prof. Neil Kodesh

University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2015/12

Hiphop and Don't Stop: Global Hiphop, Prof. Marcyliena Morgan

Harvard University, 2015/05

Hip Hop Diplomacy and Social Justice, Prof. Chérie Rivers Ndaliko

University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, 2015/02

Teaching Assistantships:

African American Novel, With Prof. Alex Weheliye

Northwestern University, 2013/09-2013/12

Postcolonial African American Studies, With Prof. Barnor Hesse

Northwestern University, 2012/04-2012/06

Intro to African American Studies, With Prof. Michelle Wright

Northwestern University, 2012/01-2012/03

Black Visual Culture, With Prof. Kinohi Nishikawa

Northwestern University, 2011/09-2011/12.

Diaspora Studies, With Prof. Richard Iton

Northwestern University, 2011/04-2011/06

Philosophy, Race, and Racism, With Prof. Charles W. Mills

Northwestern University, 2011/01-2011/03

Social Meaning of Race, With Prof. John Marquez

Northwestern University, 2010/09-2010/12

Artistic Accomplishments (full artist CV available upon request)

Performance Affiliations:

- Host of *Rap News USA* (www.youtube.com/DopePoetsDotCom) (2011-present)
- Solo HipHop artist, *ProfessorD.us* (2007-present)
- Alternate lead vocalist for HipHop Jazz band, *Gruvasylum* (2006-present)
led by Brownman, award winning composer and member of the late great Guru's *Jazzmatazz*
- Lead vocalist of HipHop group, *The Dope Poet Society* (1992-present)

Highlights:

- Mentored by Chuck D of Public Enemy
- Released four critically acclaimed CDs on Justus League Records
- Multiple international tours in all major markets
- First Canadian urban act to showcase at Midem (world's largest music conference)
- One of the first Canadian HipHop groups to release a full length album

- One of the top selling independent acts in Canadian HipHop history
- Designated cultural presenter for 100+ Canadian delegation to the 16th World Youth and Students Festival in Caracas, Venezuela in 2005. The associated HipHop summit included artists from across the hemisphere. Attendance 17,000+
- Performed and/or collaborated with many of HipHop's most influential artists (Public Enemy, KRS-One, Wyclef Jean, De la Soul, Maestro Fresh Wes, etc.)

University and Community Service

- Conducted Graduate Student Workshop, "From Essay to Article: Let's get Published!" (2016/10)
- Global Music and Sound Studies Curriculum Committee (2015-16, 2016-17)
- Faculty Senate Representative for the Department of African Cultural Studies and the Department of Afro-American Studies (2016-17)
- Department of African Cultural Studies Community Relations Committee (2015-16, 2016-17)
- Department of African Cultural Studies Graduate Admissions & Fellowships Committee (2015-16, 2016-17)
- Student Advising: PhD student committee member (2016/01-2017/08); MA student Advisor (2015/01-2016/12); MA student committee member (2015/09-2015/12)
- Performed at 10th year anniversary celebration for the Office of Multicultural Arts Initiatives (OMAI) and First Wave Program. UW-M (2015)
- Performed with Juan de Marcos González and the University's Jazz ensemble for the Arts Institute, UW-M (2015)
- Introduced Abd Al Malik's film, "May Allah Bless France" at the Tales from Planet Earth annual film festival. Madison Museum of Contemporary Art (MMoCA) (2015)
- Northwestern University African-American Studies Graduate Student Representative (2010)
- Executive board member of C.H.I. Cypher: Chicago HipHop Interdisciplinary Studies Cypher (2010-2012)
- Scholars' Panel Co-Chair, Remixing the Art of Social Change: Words, Beats and Life Chicago Teach-in (2011/05) Columbia College, Chicago IL.
- Program Director, The Toronto Hip Hop Cultural Arts Center (2000-2005)

Professional Associations

African Studies Association (ASA)
 Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)
 American Sociological Association (ASA)
 National Council for Black Studies (NCBS)
 Critical Ethnic Studies Association (CESA)
 Canadian Ethnic Studies Association (CES)
 Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS)
 Urban Music Association of Canada (UMAC)

References

Professor Mary Pattillo
 Harold Washington Professor of Sociology
 Professor of African American Studies
 African American Studies Department
 Department of Sociology
 1808 Chicago Avenue, Room 202
 Northwestern University
 Evanston, IL 60208
 847-491-3409
m-pattillo@northwestern.edu

Professor Charles W. Mills
 John Evans Professor of Moral and Intellectual
 Philosophy
 Department of Philosophy
 Crowe 1-141, 1860 Campus Drive
 Northwestern University
 Evanston, IL 60208
 847-491-2551
c-mills@northwestern.edu

Professor Dwight A. McBride

Professor Nitasha Tamar Sharma

Dean of The Graduate School & Associate Provost
Daniel Hale Williams Professor of African American Studies,
English & Performance Studies
African American Studies Department
5-142 Crowe, 1860 Campus Dr.
Northwestern University
Evanston, IL 60208
847-491-5122
dwight-mcbride@northwestern.edu

Professor Aldon Morris
Leon Forrest Professor of Sociology
Department of Sociology
812 Chicago Avenue, Room 102
Northwestern University
Evanston, IL 60208
847-491-3448
amorris@northwestern.edu

Professor Stephen Clarkson
Political Science Department
15 King's College Circle
University of Toronto
Toronto, ON, M5S 3H7
Canada
clarkson@chass.utoronto.ca

Associate Professor of African American Studies,
Asian American Studies, and Performance Studies
African American Studies Department
5-133 Crowe, 1860 Campus Dr.
Northwestern University
Evanston, IL 60208
847-467-0448
n-sharma@northwestern.edu

Professor Alexander Weheliye
Associate Professor of African American Studies
Director of Graduate Studies
African American Studies Department
Crowe 5-121, 1860 Campus Dr.
Northwestern University
Evanston, IL 60208
847-491-4863
a-weheliye@northwestern.edu

Professor Joseph Carens
Political Science Department
15 King's College Circle
University of Toronto
Toronto, ON, M5S 3H7
Canada
jcarens@chass.utoronto.ca